3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

any construction begins, the family and the geomancer make careful enquiries of priests, the elderly, even the gods, to be sure that the house is not placed on the site of an old temple or shrine. Indignant gods could bring untold misery on the family for generations. When construction is underway, the geomancer supervises the building of the ritually important cooking stove, a large, square, brick structure which is intimately tied to the welfare of the family. If it is clumsily built, or improperly oriented, misfortune or even death may come to family members. The family must also prevent those who bear them ill will from secretly inserting dangerous magical objects in the partially constructed stove. If the carpenters and bricklayers are ill-paid or disrespectfully treated, they too might practice various forms of witchcraft on the stove or on the main roof beam. The welfare of the family in both the present and the future generations is irrevocably involved in the construction of their home.

The original rectangle of a new rural home may vary somewhat in size, floor plan, or interior decoration, but the basic outline is the same for all. In the center of the front wall of each house are double doors which open into the guest hall. In most houses the floor of the guest hall is of beaten earth, the same as the other rooms of the house, but in more affluent homes the hall is distinguished by a concrete floor. The one village home with concrete floors throughout displays a terrazzo floor in the guest hall. This room is the stage on which a family presents itself to the world. Here one often finds a scroll of unexpected quality and such luxuries as a radio or a sewing machine; here also are the material representations of the family's charter, their ancestral tablets. These are flat, rectangular slips of wood, rounded on the top like grave stones, each inscribed in black ink with the posthumous name of a deceased member of the family. In every home these are arranged on a tall, narrow altar table set against the wall opposite the front door. To the foreign eye this altar is a clutter of religious paraphernalia, but there is order here if not neatness. The gods take precedence over the ancestors and their images are thus always to the right of the altar; men take precedence over women and thus the tablets of men are always to the right of those of their wives. Where the tablets are arranged in a small lacquer box, the more recently deceased are at the front of the box; where they are arranged on open shelves, the most distant ancestors stand on the top of the shelf at the head of a pyramid.

Individually, the tables have little significance. They are simply